

REMARKS

The Final Office Action dated July 1, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 10, 19, 20, 22 and 23 are amended herein. As amended, claims 1, 10 and 22 remain the independent claims.

The applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication in the Action that claims 5-9 and 14-19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 2, 10, 19, 20, 22 and 23 are amended herein to avoid use of the word "margin" with regard to the page image because it might be misconstrued as denoting the area at the edge of a document that is not scanned. The use of the word "blank" to refer to left and right margin areas of the image of the page appears, for example, in line 8 on page 1 of the specification. It is respectfully submitted that the changes made do not affect the scope or meaning of the claims.

In the Final Office Action, claims 1, 10 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Kazuo (Japanese Patent Publ. No. 403037282A). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner apparently relies on the English-language abstract of Kazuo reference. According to the Examiner, Kazuo teaches a facsimile machine, but in fact Kazuo teaches a serial printer. The title of the invention is "printer" and the word "facsimile" does not appear anywhere in the application. This difference is significant because whereas a facsimile machine receives page image data, a serial printer like the one disclosed in Kazuo simply receive a series of character codes from a host computer and prints the characters, one after the other, on successive lines as the carriage travels back and forth between the right and left margins.

According to the Examiner, the facsimile machine taught by Kazuo comprises a detection unit detecting transition points in a width direction in image data. In fact, Kazuo teaches a paper width detector (3) that uses photosensors, for example, to detect the physical width of the paper, as noted in the lower left block of Japanese text on page 2.

The embodiment described by Kazuo is a wire dot matrix printer that receives character data from a host computer, expands the characters into dot matrix patterns as shown in Figs. 2 and 3, for example, and prints the dot patterns. In a conventional printer of this type, if a line of characters overruns the printing margins, it is carried over to the next line. As a result, the number of printed lines increases, from the number of lines shown in Fig. 4(a) to the number shown in Fig. 4 (b), for example. Kazuo's teaching is to delete the overrunning text as shown in Fig. 3 (d), so that the number of printed lines does not change. More specifically, in Fig. 3 (c), the dot data to the left of position I and to the right of position II, describing the letters "A" and "H", are deleted from the image buffer in the printer's RAM (4) so that the remaining dot data from I to II match the width of the page as detected by the paper width detector (3). That is, if the carriage carrying the wire dot printing head travels from left to right, it receives data read in order from address I to address II; if the carriage travels from right to left, it receives data read in the reverse order from address II to address I.

Contrary to the Examiner's position, Kazuo does not teach any type of detector that examines the printing data received from the host computer, or the dot data stored in the image buffer, to detect transitions or find blank areas, and does not teach any adjustment of the image data made on the basis of the detected transitions, as the independent claims require. The printer described by Kazuo is therefore unable to decide how much blank area is included at the left and right edges of the page image and to make adjustments that take advantage of these blank areas.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that amended claims 1, 10 and 22 patentably distinguish over the applied prior art reference.

Claims 2-4, 11-12, 20-21 and 23-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Kazuo in view of Ogura (U.S. Patent No. 4,876,609). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 2-4, 11-12, 20-21 and 23-25 are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from independent claims 1, 10 and 22. Further, it is submitted that the dependent claims recite features that independently distinguish over the applied art combination. With regard to claim 2, for example, the Examiner acknowledges that Kazuo fails to disclose "wherein the image data are coded

data that have not yet been expanded into bit-mapped image data, and the detection unit detects margins of the page image on the basis of the transition points of the coded data.”

To overcome this deficiency in the base reference, the Examiner points to Ogura as disclosing this limitation at column 7, lines 20-48, and argues that at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to utilize Ogura’s invention in that of Kazuo. However, the text referenced by the Examiner in columns 7 of Ogura is a discussion of data compression and expansion in facsimile transmission and does not appear at all germane to the claims at issue. There appears to be nothing in Ogura that would suggest the combination proposed by the Examiner.

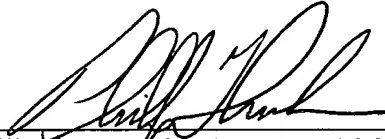
The applicant believes that the amendments herein to the claims do not raise any issues requiring further search or other significant effort on the part of the Examiner, and are therefore appropriate for entry under 37 CFR 1.116. The applicant submits that claims 1-26, as amended, patentably distinguish over the applied art references, whether considered individually or in combination. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the final rejection, and allowance of the application, are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner feel that a conference would help to expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


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